

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

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AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

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UNCLAS COPENHAGEN 0475

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TAGS: EFIS, PBOR, DA

SUBJ: FISHERIES VIOLATIONS IN FAEROE ISLANDS

1. TWO DANISH NEWSPAPERS "AKTUEL" AND "POLITIKEN" REPORTED ON FEBRUARY 7 AND 8 APPARENT VIOLATIONS OF THE FAEROESE 12-MILE LIMIT. VIOLATORS ARE REPORTED TO BE PREDOMINANTLY FROM THE UK BUT ALSO INCLUDE DUTCH AND BELGIAN VESSELS. ONE SCOTTISH TRAWLER WAS SEIZED INSIDE 12-MILE LIMIT AND FINED 80,000 KRONER (\$13,000) PLUS CONFISCATION OF CATCH AND GEAR. REPORTEDLY, 25-30 UK VESSELS ARE OPERATING OFF THE ISLANDS.

2. NEWSPAPERS THEORIZE THAT REDUCTION OF FISHING EFFORT OFF ICELAND IS CAUSING THOSE AFFECTED SEGMENTS OF FLEET TO SEEK OTHER FISHING GROUNDS. FOREIGN FLAG VESSELS ARE REPORTEDLY MOVING INSIDE THE 12-MILE LIMIT AT NIGHT WITH THEIR LIGHTS OFF TO WORK INSHORE
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GROUND.

3. FAEROESE ARE ALSO CONCERNED ABOUT FISHING EFFORT IN A LARGE SPAWNING AREA NORTH OF THE ISLANDS, OUTSIDE THE 12-MILE LIMIT. THE AREA HAS BEEN DECLARED A CONSERVATION ZONE WITH FISHING PROHIBITED DURING FEBRUARY-APRIL PERIOD. THE WATERS ARE PATROLLED BY A 220 FT., DANISH PATROL-CUTTER-FRIGATE, WHICH CARRIES ONE HELICOPTER AND ALSO BY ONE SMALLER PATROL CRAFT.

4. POUL OLSEN, CHAIRMAN OF THE FAEROESE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, TOLD THE PRESS THAT ALTHOUGH HE WAS CONCERNED ABOUT ILLEGAL FISHING, THE FAEROESE WOULD TRY TO CONTROL FOREIGN FISHING WITH EXISTING FISHERY PATROLS AND MENTIONED THE ADDITION OF A NEW PATROL VESSEL NEXT APRIL. HE ALSO SAID THE ISLANDS PREFER TO MAINTAIN GOOD RELATIONS WITH ALL NATIONS WHICH HAVE TRADITIONALLY FISHED THE AREA. SOCIAL DEMOCRAT FOLKETING MEMBER, JOHAN NIELSEN, INDICATED HE WAS READY TO ASK FOR GOVERNMENT HELP TO SOLVE PROBLEM SHOULD IT BECOME NECESSARY. HE ALSO SAID UK, HOLLAND AND BELGIUM HAD PROMISED NOT TO SEND ADDITIONAL FISHING VESSELS TO THE ISLANDS, AND HE FINALLY COMMENTED THAT THE ISLANDS WERE FORCED TO GO EASY SINCE THEY DID NOT HAVE ANY RETALIATORY WEAPON SUCH AS ICELAND'S NATO BASES. MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES POUL DALSGER TOLD THE PRESS THAT HE HAD NOT RECEIVED ANY REPORTS OF THE FAEROESE EPISODES BUT THAT HE WOULD INVESTIGATE THE MATTER AND, IF CIRCUMSTANCES WARRANTED, NOTIFY THE FOREIGN MINISTRY FOR APPROPRIATE ACTION. HE ALSO EXPRESSED SURPRISE THAT THE SO-CALLED COD WAR WOULD HAVE ANY INFLUENCE ON FAEROESE FISHERIES.

5. COMMENT: EMBASSY CONTACTED MR. ANDREASEN OF THE LEGAL SECTION OF THE DANISH FOREIGN MINISTRY FOR THEIR OPINION OF THE INFRACTION. HE CONFIRMED THAT HIS OFFICE HAD NOT BEEN ASKED FOR ASSISTANCE BY THE FAEROESE. HE INDICATED THAT THE FAEROESE WITH THE HELP OF DANISH PATROL VESSELS WILL BE CAPABLE OF MONITORING FISHING ACTIVITY OFF THEIR COASTS AND PUNISHING ANY OFFENDERS IN THEIR COURTS. MR. ANDREASEN ALSO MENTIONED THE 1973 CONSERVATION ZONE

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AGREEMENT SIGNED BY DENMARK, NORWAY, FRANCE, POLAND, GREAT BRITAIN AND WEST GERMANY WHICH ESTABLISHED CONTROL OVER FISHING EFFORT IN CERTAIN COASTAL REGIONS OFF THE ISLANDS DURING FISH SPAWNING SEASON. THERE ARE ALSO BILATERAL AGREEMENTS WITH THE ABOVE LISTED COUNTRIES TO RESTRICT TRAWL FISHING CATCHES SO THT THEY DO NOT EXCEED BY MORE THAN 10 PERCENT THE HIGHEST FIGURE IN THOSE YEARS RECORDED BY THE OFFICIAL STATISTICAL ORGANIZATION ESTABLISHED

BY THE NATIONS. INTERESTINGLY, UK CATCH STATISTICS
FOR 1974 AND 1975 INDICATE THT UK VESSELS ACHIEVED
THEIR HIGHEST CATCH PER UNIT OF EFFORT FOR GROUND FISH
OFF THE FAEROESE ISLANDS.
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